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Daily 5 and Cafe Launch - Part 2 (ARTICLE)

A Note from Joan and Gail ("The Sisters"): *We are working on a new book about launching the school year, with much of the writing to be completed this fall and winter. As we work, we'll be sharing some of our drafts with Daily CAFÉ members. This is the second excerpt in a three-part series from the start of the book.*

Did you miss Part 1? [You can find it](#)

[here.](#)

Part 2: Going Slow on the Stair Steps: Day 1 in Tina's Classroom

Tina looks around her classroom minutes before students arrive, and everything is just as she likes it. The walls are nearly bare, save for headings like CAFÉ and Math Daily 5, waiting for the lessons and demonstrations that will lead to them slowly filling over the year. There are books everywhere -- not just in the library area, but in baskets and tubs throughout the room. Lined along the wall are book boxes labeled with each child's name. Tina has selected 5-6 books for each box, even though she doesn't know the students yet -- there is a range of fiction and nonfiction, but no chapter books.

Tina already has memories of this year's class in her mind. Three days ago Emilio pumped his fist in the air and went right over to the bin of bug books, dragging his mother along for a look. Tina can picture Alana in her dad's arms, her head against his shoulder as he walked through the room with her. Tina wrote a letter to families a month ago, inviting them to drop off classroom supplies and bring their child to visit before the start of school. Over half the children came with at least one parent at some time during the past few days. Tina showed each child where to put their supplies in community bins, and gave them a chance to browse books in the large tubs and bins placed throughout the room. These children know their "job" when they come to the room on the first day is to find a book to read in one of the tubs and to start reading. Tina has also asked them to help any classmates who may not know this is their job.

As the students file into the room with parents on this first day of school, Tina greets everyone, giving extra time to the families and children she hasn't met yet. Within minutes, there are children scattered across the room -- on rugs, pillows, and at tables, happily browsing books or dumping crayons and papers into the bins Tina has labeled with words and pictures for supplies. These will be sorted and distributed all year long in the trays and storage caddies used by everyone.

Once everyone has arrived, Tina pulls the group together on the rug in the community area for their first read aloud. The book she will read is *Chrysanthemum*, and she begins with a lesson on "Three Ways to Read a Book" -- reading the pictures, text, or pictures and text together. As she reads the book, she pauses to present a minilesson on "Checking for Understanding." The two brief lessons on "Three Ways to Read a Book" and "Checking for Understanding" as well as the read aloud take almost seven minutes to complete. Students are beginning to squirm, so it's time for a brain and body break. Tina has taught many different grade levels, and she knows the minutes students can attend to a lesson roughly match their age. For example, if Tina was teaching ten year olds, she knows she could give lessons that are about ten minutes long. First graders can handle 6-7 minutes of instruction, and no more, before they need a break.

Tina has everyone stand up, stretch their arms and legs, and then teaches the song "Chester." Everyone sings along joyfully - except for Brian, who has wandered over to the supply area, and Mariah, who has skipped her way into the class restroom for a break. But overall, Tina is impressed with how well the class

has attended to the lesson. They are ready for the first round of Daily 5.

Tina's Day 1 Schedule

- Greet Students
- Book Browsing and Independent Reading
- Read Aloud with 3 Ways to Read a Book and Check for Understanding Minilessons
- Brain and Body Break
- Read to Self I-Chart
- Practice Round 1 Daily 5
- Reflection and Lesson on "1-4" Signal
- Walking in the Hall I-Chart
- School Tour
- Writing Lesson and Practice
- Read Aloud (Henke Author Study) with Introduction to CAFÉ Menu
- Practice Round 2 Daily 5
- Word Work Materials Lesson and Practice
- Lunch/Recess
- Chapter Book Read Aloud
- Practice Round 3 Daily 5
- Daily 5 Math Introduction
- Brain and Body Break
- Self Portrait Art Project
- Preparation for Dismissal

Read to Self begins with the creation of the first I-Chart of the year. Students contribute behaviors (read the whole time, stay in one spot, get started right away, use a quiet voice, work on stamina). After constructing the first part of the chart, Tina picks a child to demonstrate a correct model of read to self, and another child to demonstrate an incorrect model. Then it's time for practice -- as each child's name is called, they go to pick up their book box and then Tina places them somewhere in the room. This helps everyone become aware of the many places for reading in the room (on the rugs, chairs, at desks) and the importance of finding a comfortable spot.

Finally, everyone is reading quietly. Tina scans the room, looking for the barometer child -- the one who stops reading first and will quickly get everyone else off task. Within two minutes, Brian is out of his seat and

heading over for a chat with his best friend Trevor. Tina sounds the chimes, and calls everyone back to the meeting area. There is a brief reflection period, where Tina teaches children the "1-4" signal to note which of the Read to Self behaviors from the I-Chart they followed, and which they need to work more on next time.

Reflections and Transitions

It's only mid-morning, and already a lot of hard work has been accomplished. Time for a break to tour the school. Tina has set up an I-Chart by the door labeled "Walking in the Hall." At this point, the group is on borrowed time for taking in more information for self-monitoring. Tina has everyone stand by the door and quickly list a few desirable behaviors - Keep Your Hands to Yourself, Walk Don't Run, and Tina's favorite, Pretend There's Marshmallows in Your Mouth. She has everyone practice puffing out their cheeks and encourages them to keep those cheeks puffed as they walked. It's a trick that makes her class the quietest walkers in the school.

After the class returns from the school tour, Tina takes a quick look at the

[href="http://www.TheDailyCafe.com/Foundation%20Lessons%20for%20Daily%205%20and%20CAFE-2.pdf">StairSteps Chart](http://www.TheDailyCafe.com/Foundation%20Lessons%20for%20Daily%205%20and%20CAFE-2.pdf) to figure out what she will teach next. She knows she will have worked her way through the whole chart of lessons and activities by the end of the first week, and her students will become progressively more independent each day. The morning has been filled with lots of reading -- it's time to do some writing.

The class comes together in the rug area, and Tina models a bit of writing. She jots on chart paper a few sentences about what she did last night, underlining words she isn't quite sure how to spell. On this first day, that is plenty for students to take in -- that we write about our lives, and that we underline words that might be misspelled rather than getting hung up on trying to spell everything perfectly in a first draft. After a four-minute demonstration, Tina distributes sheets of blank paper. Students find a spot to write in the classroom -- about anything that happened yesterday or today, underlining misspelled words. There will be time later in the week to introduce writer's notebooks and folders for storing drafts. For now, starting on day one with some writing is enough.

After morning recess, Tina reads Lily's Purple Plastic Purse -- Kevin Henkes will be the focus all this week for an author study. As she reads, she models Check for Understanding. This lesson will be reinforced throughout the early weeks of school. This time, she stands and points to the CAFÉ menu, introducing the term comprehension. She writes "Check for Understanding" on a sentence strip prepared for display on the menu -- in the future these strategies will all be written and posted by students. By the middle of the book, she will ask student volunteers to model with her how to check for understanding, using the language "I just heard you read. . ."

After the read aloud, it's time for another practice round of "Read to Self" from Daily 5. In these early days, there may be time 3-5 rounds. Tina watches again for the barometer child, stopping the group after only a couple minutes when she notices restless behavior.

There will be one more lesson before lunch break -- learning about the Materials for Word Work. Tina pulls out each of the five options for word work -- white boards, magnet letters, beans/shells, clay in lids, and stamps from the supply area, explaining briefly how each might be used and where they are housed. She then picks five names at a time out of the class name cup, having each group of children go over to the supply area, retrieve materials for word work, and replace them. Seeing and doing the task repeatedly is essential in building muscle memory for students.

There's just enough time for one more quick rereading of a Kevin Henkes picture book, and then there is the

inevitable confusion of sorting through hot lunch, cold lunch and missing lunches for the first day.

During lunch break, Tina checks in with her colleagues and feels a little twitch of insecurity as they talk about all they have accomplished already today with students. Most have completed lessons in math and literacy, launched writer's workshop, and even completed an art project. In contrast, Tina has spent most of the morning with students learning and practicing the behaviors expected for independent reading. She always feels a little guilty that it takes so long at the start of the year to establish these routines, yet Tina has learned there are no shortcuts.

After lunch, it's time for Tina's favorite moment of the day -- the chapter book read aloud. James and the Giant Peach is always the first book of the year, whether Tina is working with first or sixth graders. There's no better book for teaching children about similes and the power of alternative words for "said". Students love the book, and Tina reaps the payoffs in their writing all year long.

The afternoon passes in a swirl of introducing the Daily 5 in math, a couple more brain and body breaks, and most important, a chance for children to complete self-portraits. Tina made the mistake one year of nixing an art project the first day. Students were so disappointed they didn't get to use their new crayons and markers that three burst into tears and went home crying. That's a lesson Tina doesn't need to learn twice.

After finally sorting through who goes on what bus and who walks home, the class is empty. Quiet. It's been a good day. Nearly perfect, though after 15 years, it's still a surprise at how much doesn't get done on the first day. Tina tidies the room, refers to the Stair Steps to revise tomorrow's plans, and heads home.

Why has Tina's day gone so smoothly? Stay tuned for next week's installment when we share how our school launch has changed over the years.

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